



Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number:
P.C. 11/17/03 Item: 3.i

File Number:
GP03-06-09

Council District and SNI Area:
6

Major Thoroughfares Map Number:
83

Assessor's Parcel Number(s):
261-010-011, -012, -088

Project Manager:
Erin Morris

GENERAL PLAN REPORT

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

General Plan Amendment request to change the Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation for a 0.94-acre site from Mixed Use with No Underlying Land Use Designation on 0.80-acres and Medium Density Residential (8-16 DU/AC) on 0.14-acres to General Commercial.

LOCATION: Northeast corner of Rhodes Court and The Alameda

ACREAGE: 0.94 (40,946 sq. ft.)

APPLICANT/OWNER:

Staff/Boccardo Trust

GENERAL PLAN LAND USE / TRANSPORTATION DIAGRAM DESIGNATION:

Existing Designation: Mixed Use with No Underlying Land Use Designation on 0.80-acres and Medium Density Residential (8-16 DU/AC) on 0.14 acres

Proposed Designation: General Commercial

EXISTING ZONING DISTRICT(S): CO – Commercial Office and CP – Commercial Pedestrian

SURROUNDING LAND USES AND GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION(S):

North: Residential – Medium Density Residential (8-16 DU/AC)

South: Commercial – General Commercial & Neighborhood Business District Overlay

East: Hotel – General Commercial with Neighborhood Business District Overlay

West: Offices – General Commercial & Neighborhood Business District Overlay

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS:

Mitigated Negative Declaration adopted on October 24, 2003.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

General Commercial

Approved by:

Date:

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

CITY DEPARTMENT AND PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED:

None received.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:

None received.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a staff initiated General Plan amendment to change the *San Jose 2020 General Plan* Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation from Mixed Use with No Underlying Land Use Designation on 0.80 acres and Medium Density Residential (8-16 DU/AC) on 0.14 acres to General Commercial for a 0.94-acre site located on the northeast corner of Rhodes Court and The Alameda (see map attached). The General Commercial designation is a non-specialized commercial designation intended to permit miscellaneous commercial uses. It includes both strip commercial areas along major thoroughfares as well as freestanding commercial establishments. Business and professional office uses are also allowed within this General Plan designation. The properties fronting on The Alameda are within the Neighborhood Business District Overlay designation. The proposed amendment would not alter the Neighborhood Business District Overlay.

BACKGROUND

The current General Plan designation of Mixed Use with No Underlying designation was the subject of a City Council-initiated amendment approved in 2000. The purpose of the amendment was to permit higher density residential uses, either by themselves or in mixed use development with commercial or office. The specific mix of uses allowed includes up to 144 dwelling units and approximately 7.0 acres of retail commercial and/or office uses. Such a mix of uses was determined compatible with the existing uses in and around the amendment area.

Currently, there is a Planned Development (PD) Rezoning on file for the entire amendment site. The PD Zoning proposal includes a one-story commercial retail building of up to 13,500 square feet and associated parking facilities. The existing Mixed Use with No Underlying Land use Designation would permit the proposed retail commercial use. However, the 0.14 acre parcel at the northern edge the site is designated Medium Density Residential (8-16 DU/AC) and requires a land use amendment to General Commercial to facilitate the proposed project. In order to clarify the allowed use for the entire site, staff is recommending the General Commercial designation be applied to the entire 0.94 acre site. If the subject General Plan Amendment is approved, the PD Zoning is scheduled for hearing before the Planning Commission in December 2003 and the City Council in January 2004.

Site and Surrounding Uses

The amendment site is located within the Downtown Frame area on the northeast corner of Rhodes Court and The Alameda. The existing uses on the site consist of a vacant office building and parking lot on the larger portion of the site fronting on The Alameda, and a vacant single-family home on the northern portion of the property.

The existing uses surrounding the site include single- and two-family dwellings to the north, a hotel to the east, a commercial strip center to the south, and office and single-family residential uses to the west.

ANALYSIS

Land Use Compatibility

The General Commercial designation would permit miscellaneous commercial uses. Uses that have both commercial and industrial characteristics, such as self-service warehousing, automobile lubrication, and other similar uses would not be permitted because the site is within an area characterized by pedestrian oriented, retail commercial uses.

The General Plan designation for the properties fronting on The Alameda also includes the Neighborhood Business District (NBD) Overlay. The Alameda NBD is an example of a “Main Street” district, where new development should provide buildings connected to each other, forming a continuous street façade, with no setback from the sidewalk. Future commercial development on the site should reflect this pattern. The proposed amendment to General Commercial is intended to help foster commercial development that supports pedestrian activity and avoids adversely impacting adjoining residential uses. Future commercial development is subject to additional discretionary review and should be designed in conformance with the Commercial Design Guidelines to address the relationship and “buffer” future commercial uses and the adjoining single-family neighborhood.

Policy Consistency

The *San Jose 2020 General Plan* has seven Major Strategies that identify the principles of the *Plan*. Of those seven, this amendment directly relates to two of them: the Economic Development and the Sustainable City Major Strategies. The Economic Development Major Strategy encourages more commercial and industrial growth to balance existing residential development. The Sustainable City Major Strategy seeks to reduce traffic congestion, pollution, wastefulness, and environmental degradation. Working towards achieving a relative jobs/housing balance would conserve energy, and improve water and air quality. Increasing the amount of lands designated as General Commercial would help to further the intent of the Economic Development and Sustainable City Major Strategies by providing for more jobs in the area.

The Goals and Policies of the General Plan support the Major Strategies. Commercial Land Use Policy No.1 supports the proposed General Plan amendment and reads as follows:

- Commercial land in San Jose should be distributed in a manner that maximizes community accessibility to a variety of retail commercial outlets and services, and minimizes the need for automobile travel. New commercial development should be located near existing centers of employment or population, or in close proximity to transit facilities and should be designed to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access through techniques such as minimizing building separation from the street, providing safe, accessible, convenient and pleasant pedestrian connections, secure bike storage, etc. Employee intensive uses should be encouraged to locate along multi-modal transit corridors.

The amendment site is located on a major thoroughfare, The Alameda. Several bus lines are provided on The Alameda which connect to the larger transit network. New development on the site should be designed to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access. A majority of the parcels fronting on The Alameda are

designated General Commercial. Commercial development on the site would be adjacent to the existing commercial development and residential neighborhoods.

Environmental Issues

The proposed change in the General Plan land use designation on the subject site was analyzed in an initial study that resulted in a Mitigated Negative Declaration. The initial study determined that the change in land use would create a less than significant impact with mitigation measures in the following categories:

- Aesthetics
- Geology and soils
- Land Use and Planning

All of the mitigation measures consist of the implementation of existing General Plan policies at the zoning and development permit stages.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The property owners within the amendment site boundaries and/or property owners within a 1000-foot radius of the amendment site were sent a newsletter regarding the two community meetings that were held on October 14th and 15th, 2003. No comments were received on this specific amendment at any of the community meetings. They also received a public hearing notice regarding the public hearings to be held on the subject amendment before the Planning Commission and City Council in November. In addition, the community can be kept informed about the status of amendments on the Department's web-site, which contains information on the General Plan process, each proposed amendment, staff reports, and hearing schedule.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends General Commercial.

Attachments

PBCE002/GP_Team/2003 Annual Review/GP03-06-09/Staff Reports